

[CHEAP REPOSITORY.] [No. VII.]

THE
Two Wealthy Farmers;
Or, the History of
Mr. BRAGWELL.

PART III.



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Two Wealthy Farmers, &c.

P A R T III.

He had, however, so strong a desire to be useful to Mr. Bragwell, that he at length determined to break through his practice and pass the Sunday at his house. Mr. Worthy was surprised to find that though the Church bell was going, the breakfast was not ready, and expressed his wonder how this should be the case in so industrious a family. Bragwell made some awkward excuses. He said his wife worked her servants so hard all the week, that even she, as notable as she was, a little relaxed from the strictness of her demands on Sunday mornings; and he owned that in a general way, no one was up early enough for church. He confessed that his wife commonly spent the morning in making puddings, pies, and cakes, to last through the week, as Sunday was the only leisure time she and her maids had. Mr. Worthy soon saw an uncommon bustle in the house. All hands were busy. It was nothing but baking, and boiling

and frying, and roasting, and running, and scolding, and eating. The boy was kept from Church to clean the plate, the man to gather the fruit, the mistress to make the cheese-cakes, the maids to dress the dinner, and the young ladies to dress themselves.

The truth was, Mrs. Bragwell, who had heard much of the order and good management of Mr. Worthy's family, but who looked down with disdain upon them as far less rich than herself, was resolved to indulge her vanity on the present occasion. She was determined to be even with Mrs. Worthy, in whose praises Bragwell had been so loud, and felt no small pleasure in the hope of making her guest uneasy, when he should be struck with the display both of her skill and her wealth. Mr. Worthy was indeed struck to behold as large a dinner as he had been used to see at a Justice's meeting. He, whose frugal and pious wife had accustomed him only to such a Sunday's dinner as could be dressed without keeping any one from church, when he surveyed the loaded table of his friend, instead of feeling that envy which these

grand preparations were meant to raise, felt nothing but disgust at the vanity of his friend's wife, mixed with much thankfulness for the piety of his own.

After having made the dinner wait a long time, the Miss Bragwells marched in, dressed as if they were going to the Assize Ball; they looked very scornful at having been so hurried; though they had been dressing ever since they got up, and their fond father, when he saw them so fine, forgave all their impertinence, and cast an eye of triumph on Mr. Worthy, who felt he had never loved his own humble daughters so well as at that moment.

In the afternoon, the whole party went to church. To do them justice, it was indeed their common practice once a day, when the weather was good, and the road neither dusty nor dirty, when the Minister did not begin too early, when the young Ladies had not been disappointed of their new bonnets on the Saturday night, and when they had no smart company in the house who rather wished to stay at home. When this last was the

case, which, to say the truth, happened pretty often, it was thought a piece of good manners to conform to the humour of the guests. Mr. Bragwell had this day forborne to ask any of his usual company, well knowing that their vain and worldly conversation would only serve to draw on him some new reprimand from his guest.

Mrs. Bragwell and her daughters picked up as usual a good deal of acquaintance at church. Many compliments passed, and much of the news of the week was retailed before the service began. They waited with impatience for the lessons as a licensed season for whispering, and the subject begun during the lessons was finished while they were singing. The young Ladies made an appointment for the afternoon with a friend in the next pew, while their Mamma took the opportunity of enquiring the character of a Dairy Maid, which she observed with a compliment to her own good management, would save time on a week day.

Mr. Worthy, who found himself quite in a new world, returned home with his

friend alone. In the evening he ventured to ask Bragwell, if he did not, on a Sunday night at least, make it a custom to read and pray with his family. Bragwell told him he was sorry to say he had no family at home, else he should like to do it for the sake of example. But as his servants worked hard all the week, his wife was of opinion that they should then have a little holiday. Mr. Worthy pressed it home upon him, if the utter neglect of his servant's principles was not likely to make a heavy article in his final account: and asked him if he did not believe that the too general liberty of meeting together, jaunting and diverting themselves, on Sunday evenings, was not often found to produce the worst effects on the morals of servants and the good order of families? "I put it to your conscience," said he, "Mr. Bragwell, whether Sunday, which was meant as a blessing and a benefit, is not, as it is commonly kept, turned into the most mischievous part of the week, by the selfish kindness of masters, who, not daring to set their servants about any public work, allot them that day to follow their own devices, that they themselves may with

more rigour refuse them a little indulgence and a reasonable holiday in the working part of the week, which a good servant has now and then a right to expect." Those masters who will give them half or all of the Lord's day, will not spare them a single hour of a working day. *Their work must be done; God's work may be let alone.*"

Mr. Bragwell owned that Sunday had produced many mischiefs in his own family. That the young men and maids, having no eye upon them, frequently went to improper places with other servants turned adrift like themselves. That in these parties the poor girls were too frequently led astray, and the men got to public houses and fives-playing. But it was none of his business to watch them. His family only did as others do; indeed it was his wife's concern; and as she was so good a manager on other days, that she would not spare them an hour even to visit a sick father or mother, it would be hard she said, if they might not have Sunday afternoon to themselves, and she could not blame them for making the most of it. Indeed she was so indul-

gent in this particular, that she often excused the men from going to church that they might serve the beasts, and the maids that they might get the milking done before the holiday part of the evening came on. She would not indeed hear of any competition between doing *her* work and taking their pleasure; but when the difference lay between their going to church and taking their pleasure, he must say that for his wife, she was always inclined to the good-natured side of the question. She is strict enough in keeping them sober, because drunkenness is a costly sin, and to do her justice, she does not care how little they sin at her expence.

“ Well,” said Mr. Worthy, “ I always like to examine both sides fairly, and to see the different effects of opposite practices; now, which plan produces the greatest share of comfort to the master and of profit to the servants in the long run? Your servants, ’tis likely, are very much attached to you; and very fond of living where they get their own way in so great a point.”

“ O, as to that,” replied Bragwell, “ you are quite out. My house is a scene of discord, mutiny and discontent. And though there is not a better manager in England than my wife, yet she is always changing her servants, so that every Quarter-day is a sort of Gaol Delivery at my house; and when they go off, as they often do, at a moment’s warning, to own the truth, I often give them money privately, that they may not carry my wife before the Justice to get their wages.

“ I see,” said Mr. Worthy, “ that all your worldly compliances do not procure you even worldly happiness. As to my own family, I take care to let them see that their pleasure is bound up with their duty, and that what they may call my strictness, has nothing in view but their safety and happiness. By this means I commonly gain their love as well as secure their obedience. I know that with all my care I am liable to be disappointed, from the corruption that is in the world through sin. But whenever this happens, so far from encouraging me in remissness, it only serves to quicken my zeal. If by God’s blessing, my servant turns out a

good Christian, I have been an humble instrument in his hand of saving a soul committed to my charge."

Mr. Bragwell came home, but brought only one of her daughters with her, the other, she said, had given them the slip, and was gone with a young friend, and would not return for a day or two. Mr. Bragwell was greatly displeased, as he knew that young friend had but a slight character, and kept bad acquaintances. Mrs. Bragwell came in all hurry and bustle, saying, if her family did not "go to-bed with the Lamb" on Sundays, when they had nothing to do, how could they "rise with the Lark" on Mondays, when so much was to be done.

Mr. Worthy had this night much matter for reflection. "We need not," said he, "go into the great world to look for dissipation and vanity. We can find both in a farm-house. As for me and my house," continued he, "we will serve the Lord every day, but especially on Sundays. It is the day which the Lord hath made : hath made for himself ; we will rejoice in it, and consider the religious use of it not only as a duty but as a privilege."

Mr. Bragwell and Mr. Worthy set out early on the next morning on their way to the Golden Lion, a small Inn in a neighbouring market town. As they had time before them, they had agreed to ride slowly, that they might converse on some useful subject; but here, as usual, they had two opinions about the same thing. Mr. Bragwell's notion of an useful subject was, something by which money was to be got, and a good bargain struck. Mr. Worthy was no less a man of business than his friend. His schemes were wise and his calculations just; his reputation for integrity and good sense made him the common judge and umpire in his neighbours affairs, while no one paid a more exact attention to every transaction of his own. But the business of getting money was not with him the first, much less was it the whole concern of the day. Every morning when he rose, he remembered that he had a Maker to worship as well as a family to maintain. Religion however, never made him neglect business, though it sometimes led him to postpone it. He used to say, no man had any reason to expect God's blessing through the day who did not ask

it in the morning. But he had not the less sense, spirit, and activity when he was among men abroad, because he had first served God at home.

As these two Farmers rode along, Mr. Worthy took occasion from the fineness of the day, and the beauty of the country through which they passed to turn the discourse to the goodness of God and our infinite obligations to him. He knew that the transition from thanksgiving to prayer would be natural and easy, and he therefore slid, by degrees, into that important subject; and he observed that secret prayer was a duty of universal obligation, which every man had it in his power to fulfil, and which he seriously believed was the ground work of all religious practice, and of all devout affections.

Mr. Bragwell felt conscious that he was very negligent and irregular in the performance of this duty, he considered it as a mere ceremony, or at least as a duty which might give way to the slightest temptation of drowsiness at night, or of business in the morning. As he knew he did not live in the conscientious performance of this practice, he tried to ward

off the subject, knowing what a home way his friend had of putting things. At last he said, he certainly thought private prayer a good custom, especially for people who have time, and that those who were sick, or old, or out of business, could not do better, but that, for his part, he believed much of these sort of things was not expected from men in active life.

Mr. Worthy. I should think Mr. Bragwell, that those who are most exposed to temptation stand most in need of prayer; now there are few methinks who are more exposed to temptation than men in business, for those must be in most danger, at least from the world, who have most to do with it. And if this be true, ought we not to prepare ourselves in the closet for the trials of the market, the field, and the shop?

Bragwell. For my part, I think example is the whole of Religion, and if the master of a family is orderly, and regular, and goes to church, he does every thing which can be required of him, and no one has a right to call him to account for any thing more.

Worthy. Give me leave to say, Mr. Bragwell that highly as I rate a good example, still I must set a good principle above it. I must keep good order indeed, for the sake of others; but I must keep a good conscience for my own sake. To God I owe secret piety, I must therefore pray to him in private.—To my family I owe a Christian example, and for that, among other reasons, I must not fail to go to Church.

Bragwell. You are talking, Mr. Worthy, as if I were an enemy to Christianity. Sir, I am no Heathen. Sir, I belong to the Church. I always drink prosperity to the Church. You yourself, as strict as you are, in never missing it twice a day, are not a warmer friend to the Church than I am.

Worthy. That is to say, you know its value as an institution, but you do not seem to know that a man may be very irreligious under the best religious institutions; and that even the most excellent of them are but *means* of being religious, and are no more religion itself than brick and mortar are prayers and thank-

givings. I shall never think, however high their profession, and even however regular their attendance, that those men truly respect the Church, who bring home little of that religion which is taught in it into their own families, or their own hearts. Excuse me, Mr. Bragwell.

Bragwell. Mr. Worthy, I am persuaded that religion is quite a proper thing for the poor; and I don't think that the multitude can ever be kept in order without it, and I am a bit of a politician you know.

Worthy. Your opinion is very just, as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough, since it does not go to the root of the evil, for while you value yourself on the soundness of this principle as a politician, I wish you to see the reason of it as a Christian; depend upon it, if Religion be good for the community at large, it is equally good for every family; and what is right for a family is equally right for each individual in it. You have therefore yourself brought the most unanswerable argument why you ought to be religious, by asking how we shall keep others in

order without Religion. For, believe me, Mr. Bragwell, there is no particular clause to except you in the Gospel. No exceptions in favour of any one class of men. The same restraints which are necessary for the people at large are equally necessary for men of every order, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, learned and ignorant. May I ask you, Mr. Bragwell, what is your reason for going to Church?

Bragwell. Sir, I am shocked at your question. How can I avoid doing a thing so customary and so creditable? Not go to Church, indeed! What do you take me for, Mr. Worthy? I am afraid you suspect me to be a Papist, or a Heathen, or of some religion or other that is not what it should be.

Worthy. If a foreigner were to hear how violently one set of Christians in this country often speak against another, how earnest would he suppose us all to be in religious matters: and how astonished to discover that many a man has perhaps little other proof to give of the sincerity of his own religion, except the violence

with which he hates the religion of another party. It is not *irreligion* which such men hate, but the religion of the man, or the party, whom they are set against. Well, you have told me why you go to Church; now pray tell me, why do you confess there on your bended knees every Sunday, that "you have erred and strayed from God's ways?" "that there is no health in you?" "that you have done what you ought not to do?" "and that you are a miserable sinner?"

Bragwell. Because it is in the Common Prayer Book, to be sure, a book which I have heard you yourself say was written by wise and good men.

Worthy. But have you no other reason?

Bragwell. No, I can't say I have.

Worthy. When you repeat that excellent form of confession, do you really feel that you are a miserable sinner?

Bragwell. No, I can't say I do. But that is no objection to my repeating it,

because it may suit the case of many who are so. I suppose the good Doctors who drew it up intended that part for wicked people only, such as drunkards, and thieves, and murderers; for I imagine they could not well contrive to make the same prayer quite suit an honest man and a rogue; and so I suppose they thought it safer to make a good man repeat a prayer which suited a rogue, than to make a rogue repeat a prayer which suited a good man: and you know it is so customary for every body to repeat the general confession, that it can't hurt the credit of the most respectable persons, though every one must know they have no particular concern in it.

Worthy. Depend upon it, Mr. Bragwell, those good Doctors you speak of, were not quite of your opinion; they really thought that what you call honest men were grievous sinners in a certain sense, and stood in need of making that humble confession. Mr. Bragwell, do you believe in the fall of Adam?

Bragwell. To be sure I do, and a sad thing for Adam it was; why, it is in the

Bible, is it not? It is one of the prettiest chapters in Genesis. Don't you believe it, Mr. Worthy?

Worthy. Yes, truly I do. But I don't believe it *merely* because I read it in Genesis. I know, indeed, that I am bound to believe every of the word of God. But I have still an additional reason for believing in the fall of the first man.

Bragwell. Have you indeed? Now, I can't guess what that can be.

Worthy. Why my own observation of what is in myself teaches me to believe it. It is not only the third chapter of Genesis which convinces me of the truth of the fall, but also the sinful inclinations which I find in my own heart. This is one of those leading truth's of Christianity of which I can never doubt a moment, first, because it is abundantly expressed or implied in Scripture; and next, because the consciousness of the evil nature I carry about with me confirms the doctrine beyond all doubt. Besides, is it not said in Scripture that by one man sin en-

tered into the world, and that "all we, like sheep, have gone astray; that by one man's disobedience many were made sinners," and so again in twenty more places that I could tell you of.

Bragwell. Well, I never thought of this. But is not this a very melancholy sort of doctrine, Mr. Worthy?

Worthy. It is melancholy, indeed, if we stop here. But while we are deploring this sad truth, let us take comfort from another, that "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Bragwell. Yes, I remember I thought those very fine words, when I heard them said over my poor father's grave. But as it was in the Burial of the dead, I did not think of taking it to myself, for I was then young and hearty, and in little danger of dying, and I have been so busy ever since, that I have hardly had time to think of it.

Worthy. And yet the service pronounced at the burial of all who die, is a solemn admonition to all who live. It is

there said, as indeed the Scripture says also, " I am the resurrection and the life, whosoever *believeth in me* shall never die, but I will raise him up at the last day." Now do you think you *believe in Christ*, Mr. Bragwell?

Bragwell. To be sure I do; why, you are always fancying me an Atheist.

Worthy. In order to believe in Christ, we must believe first in our own guilt and our own unworthiness, and when we do this we shall see the use of a Saviour.

Bragwell. Why, all this is a new way of talking, I can't say, I ever meddled with such subjects before in my life. But now, what do you advise a man to do upon your plan of Religion?

Worthy. Why, all this leads me back to the ground from which we set out. I mean the duty of prayer; for if we believe that we have an evil nature within us, and that we stand in need of God's grace to help us, and a Saviour to redeem us, we shall be led of course to pray for what we so much need.

Bragwell. Well, but don't you think, Mr. Worthy, that you good folks who make so much of prayer, have lower notions than we of the wisdom of the Almighty? you think he wants to be informed of the things you tell him; whereas, I take for granted that he knows them already, and that, being so good as he is, he will give me every thing he sees fit to give me without my asking it.

Worthy. God, indeed, who knows all things, knows what we want before we ask him, but still has he not said, that with prayer and supplication we must make known our requests unto him." Prayer is the way in which God hath said that his favour must be sought. It is the channel through which he hath declared it is his sovereign will and pleasure that his blessings should be conveyed to us. What ascends up in prayer descends again to us in blessings. It is like the rain which just now fell, and which had been drawn up from the ground in vapours to the clouds before it descended from them to the earth in that refreshing shower. Besides prayer has a good effect on our own minds: it tends to excite a

right disposition towards God in us. But above all, it is the way to get the good things we want. "Ask," says the Scripture, "and ye shall receive."

Bragwell. Now that is the very thing which I was going to deny. For the truth is, men don't always get what they ask; I believe if I could get a good crop for asking it I should pray oftener than I do.

Worthy. Sometimes Mr. Bragwell, men "ask and receive not, because they ask amiss." They ask worldly blessings perhaps when they should ask spiritual ones. Now the latter, which are the good things I spoke of, are always granted to those who pray to God for them, though the former are not. I have observed in the case of some worldly things I have sought for, that the grant of my prayer would have caused the misery of my life.

Bragwell. And yet you continue to pray on I suppose?

Worthy. Certainly; but then I try to mend as to the object of my prayers. I

pray for God's blessing and favor, which is better than riches.

Bragwell. You seem very earnest on this subject.

Worthy. To cut the matter short, I ask then whether prayer is not positively commanded in the Gospel. When this is the case, we can never dispute about the necessity or the duty of a thing, as we may when there is no such command. Here however let me just add also, that a man's prayers may be turned to no small use in the way of discovering to him whatever is amiss in his life.

Bragwell. How so, Mr. Worthy?

Worthy. Why, suppose now, you were to try yourself by turning into the shape of a prayer every practice in which you allow yourself. For instance, let the prayer in the morning be a sort of preparation for the deeds of the day, and the prayer at night a sort of observation on those deeds. You, Mr. Bragwell, I suspect are a little inclined to covetousness, excuse me, Sir, Now suppose after you have been

during a whole day a little too eager to get rich, suppose, I say, you were to try how it would sound to beg of God at night to give you still more money though you have already so much that you know not what to do with it. Suppose you were to pray in the morning, O Lord give me more riches, though those I have are a snare and a temptation to me; and ask him in the same solemn manner to bless all the grasping means you intend to make use of in the day, to add to your substance?

Bragwell. Mr. Worthy, I have no patience with you for thinking I could be so wicked.

Worthy. Hear me out, Mr. Bragwell, you turned your good nephew, Tom Broad, out of doors you know; you owned to me it was an act of injustice. Now suppose on the morning of your doing so you had begged of God in a solemn act of prayer to prosper the deed of cruelty and oppression, which you intended to commit. I see you are shocked at the thought of such a prayer. Well, then, would not prayer have kept you from committing that wicked action? In short, what a life

must that be, no act of which you dare beg God to prosper and bless. If once you can bring yourself to believe that it is your bounden duty to pray-for God's blessing on your day's work, you will certainly grow careful about passing such a day as you may safely ask his blessing upon. The remark may be carried to sports, diversions, company. A man who once takes up the serious use of prayer, will soon find himself obliged to abstain from such diversions, occupations and societies, as he cannot reasonably desire that God will bless to him; and thus he will see himself compelled to leave off either the practice or the prayer. Now, Mr. Bragwell, I need not ask you which of the two he that is a real Christian will give up.

Mr. Bragwell began to feel that he had not the best of the argument, and was afraid he was making no great figure in the eyes of his friend. Luckily however, he was relieved from the difficulty into which the necessity of making some answer must have brought him, by finding they were come to the end of their little journey; and he never beheld the Bunch of Grapes, which decorated the Sign of the Golden Lion, with more real satisfaction.

Mr. Bragwell and Mr. Worthy alighted at the Golden Lion. It was market day: the inn, the yard, the town was all alive. Mr. Bragwell was quite in his element. He felt himself the principal man in the company. He had three great objects in view, the sale of his land, the letting Mr. Worthy see how much he was looked up to by so many substantial people, and the shewing these people what a wise man his most intimate friend Mr. Worthy was. It was his way to try to borrow a little credit from every person and every thing he was connected with, and by that credit to advance his interest and increase his wealth.

The Farmers met in a large room, and while they were transacting their various concerns, those whose pursuits were the same naturally herded together. The Tanners were drawn to one corner, by the common interest which they took in bark, and hides. A useful debate was carrying on at another little table, whether the practice of *sowing* wheat or of *planting* it were most profitable. Another set were disputing whether horses or oxen were best for plows. Those who were

concerned in Canals, fought the company of other Canallers; while some who were interested in the new bill for Inclosures, wisely looked out for such as knew most about waste lands.

Mr. Worthy was pleased with all these subjects, and picked up something useful on each. It was a saying of his, that most men understood some one thing, and that he who was wise would try to learn from every man something on the subject he best knew; but Mr. Worthy made a further use of the whole. "What a pity it is," said he, "that Christians are not as desirous to turn their time to as good account as men of business are! When shall we see religious persons as anxious to derive profit from the experience of others as these Farmers? When shall we see them as eager to turn their time to good account? While I approve these men for not being *slothful in business*, let me improve the hint by being also *fervent in spirit*."

When the hurry was a little over, Mr. Bragwell took a turn on the Bowling-green. Mr. Worthy followed him, to ask

why the sale of the estate was not brought forward. "Let the Auctioneer proceed to business," said he; "the company will be glad to get home by day light. I speak mostly with a view to others for you, I do not think of being a purchaser myself."

—"I know it," said Bragwell, "or I would not be such a fool as to let the cat out of the bag. But is it possible (proceeded he with a smile of contempt) that you should think I will sell my estate before dinner? Mr. Worthy, you are a clever man at books and such things; and perhaps can make out an account on paper in a handsomer manner than I can. But I never found much to be got by fine writing. As to figures, I can carry enough of them in my head to add, divide, and multiply more money than your learning will ever give you the fingering of. You may beat me at a book, but you are a very child at a bargain. Sell my land before dinner, indeed!"

Mr. Worthy was puzzled to guess how a man was to shew more wisdom by selling a piece of ground at one hour than another, and desired an explanation. Bragwell felt rather more contempt for

his understanding than he had ever done before. "Look'ee, Mr. Worthy," said he, "I do not know that knowledge is of any use to a man unless he has sense enough to turn it to good account. Men are my books, Mr. Worthy, and it is by reading, spelling, and putting them together to good purpose, that I have got up in the world. I shall give you a proof of this to-day. These Farmers are most of them come to the Lion with a view of purchasing this bit of land of mine, if they should like the bargain. Now, as you know a thing can't be any great bargain to the buyer and the seller too, to them and to me, it becomes me, as a man of sense, who has the good of his family at heart to secure the bargain to myself. I would not cheat any man, Sir, but I think it fair enough to turn his weakness to my own advantage; there is no law against that you know; and this is the use of one man's having more sense than another. So, whenever I have a bit of land to sell, I always give a handsome dinner, with plenty of punch and strong beer. We fill up the morning with other business, and I carefully keep back any talk about the purchase till we have dined.

At dinner we have of course a bit of politics. This puts most of us into a passion, and you know anger is thirsty. Besides, Church and King naturally bring on a good many other toasts. Now, as I am Master of the feast, you know it would be shabby in me to save my liquor, so I push about the glass one way and the other, till all my company are as merry as kings. Every man is delighted to see what a fine hearty fellow he has to deal with, and Mr. Bragwell receives a thousand compliments. By this time they have gained as much in good humour as they have lost in sober judgment, and this is the proper moment for setting the Auctioneer to work, and this I commonly do to such good purpose, that I go home with my purse a score or two of pounds heavier than if they had not been warmed by their dinner. In the morning men are cool and suspicious, and have all their wits about them; but a cheerful glass cures all distrust. And, what is lucky, add to my credit as well as my pocket, and get more praise for my dinner than blame for my bargain."

Mr. Worthy was struck with the absurd vanity which could tempt a man to own himself guilty of an unfair action for the sake of shewing his wisdom. He was beginning to express his disapprobation, when they were told dinner was on table. They went in and were soon seated. All was mirth and good cheer. Every body agreed that no one gave such hearty dinners as Mr. Bragwell. Nothing was pitiful where he was master of the Feast. Bragwell who looked with pleasure on the excellent dinner before him, and enjoyed the good account to which he should turn it, heard their praises with delight, and cast an eye on Worthy, as much as to say, "Who is the wise man now?" Having a mind to make his friend talk, he turned to him, saying, "Mr. Worthy, I believe no people enjoy life more than men of our class. We have money and power, we live on the fat of the land, and have as good a right to gentility as the best."

"As to gentility, Mr. Bragwell," replied Worthy, "I am not sure that this is among the wisest of our pretensions. But I will say that ours is a creditable and respectable business. In ancient times

Farming was the employment of Princes
 and Patriarchs; and, now-a-days, an
 honest, humane, sensible, English yeo-
 man, I will be bold to say, is not only
 a very useful but an honourable character.
 But then he must not merely think of *en-
 joying life*, as you call it, but he must
 think of living up to the great ends for
 which he was sent into the world. A
 Wealthy Farmer not only has it in his
 power to live well, but to do much good.
 He is not only the father of his own fa-
 mily, but of his workmen, his dependents,
 and the poor at large, especially in these
 hard times. He has it in his power to
 raise into credit all the parish offices which
 have fallen into disrepute by getting in-
 to bad hands; and he can convert, what
 have been falsely thought mean offices
 into very important ones, by his just and
 Christian-like manner of filling them.
 An upright Jurymen, a conscientious
 Constable, a humane Overseer, an inde-
 pendent Elector, an active Superinten-
 dant of a Work-house, a just Arbitrator
 in public disputes, a kind Counsellor in
 private troubles, such a one, I say, fills
 up a station in society no less necessary,
 and, as far as it reaches, scarcely less im-

portant than that of a Magistrate, a Sheriff of a County, or even a Member of Parliament. That can never be a slight or a degrading office, on which the happiness of a whole parish may depend."

Bragwell, who thought the good sense of his friend reflected credit on himself, encouraged Worthy to go on, but he did it in his own vain way. "Aye, very true, Mr. Worthy," said he; "You are right; a leading man in our class ought to be looked up to as an example, as you say; in order to which, he should do things handsomely and liberally, and not grudge himself or his friends any thing," casting an eye of complacency on the good dinner he had provided. "True," replied Mr. Worthy, "he should be an example of simplicity, sobriety and plainness of manners. But he will do well," added he, "not to affect a frothy gentility which will fit but clumsily upon him. If he has money let him spend prudently, lay up moderately for his children, and give liberally to the poor. But let him rather seek to dignify his own station by his virtues than to get above it by his vanity. If he acts thus, then, as long as

this country lasts, a Farmer of England will be looked upon as one of its most valuable members; nay more, by this conduct he may contribute to make England last the longer. The riches of the Farmer, corn and cattle, are the true riches of a nation; but let him remember, that tho' corn and cattle *enrich* a country, nothing but justice and integrity can *preserve* it."

Young Wilton, the worthy grazier, whom Miss Bragwell had turned off because he did not understand French dances, thanked Mr. Worthy for what he had said, and hoped he should be the better for it as long as he lived, and desired his leave to be better acquainted. Most of the others declared they had never heard a finer speech, and then, as is usual, proceeded to shew the good effect it had on them by loose conversation and hard drinking.

Mr. Worthy was much concerned to hear Mr. Bragwell, after dinner, whisper to the waiter, to put less and less water into every fresh bowl of punch. It was his way, if the time they had to

fit was long, then the punch was to be weaker, as he saw no good in wasting money to make it stronger than the time required. But if time passed, then the strength was to be increased in due proportion, as a small quantity must then intoxicate them as much in a short time as would be required of a greater quantity had the time been longer. This was one of Mr. Bragwell's nice calculations, and this was the sort of skill on which he so much valued himself.

At length the guests were properly primed for business, just in that convenient stage of intoxication which makes men warm and rash, yet short of absolute drunkenness. The Auctioneer set to work. All were bidders, and, if possible, all would have been purchasers, so happily had the feast and the punch operated. They bid on with a still increasing spirit, till they had got so much above the value of the land, that Bragwell with a wink and a whisper said, "Who would sell his land fasting? Eh! Worthy?" At length the estate was knocked down, at a price very far above its worth.

To BE CONTINUED.